



## *AOT in Action*

### ***TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

As more and more vacation information becomes available to travelers on the Internet and more travelers are using online options to book their vacation experience, it is becoming extremely important that we in the travel industry learn how to market our travel destinations to this increasing audience. Last week I had the opportunity to attend TravelCom Res Expo 2007 in Las Vegas with Casey Ambrose, AOT's director of advertising and fulfillment, to learn more about online opportunities for travelers and how to market more effectively to this audience. The technology conference focused on trends in the digital world and featured experts that discussed the growing online trends such as eCommerce and online marketing. Speakers also discussed how social networking and social media Web sites impact how we talk and market to visitors interested in coming to Arizona destinations. According to industry research, more than 50 percent of travelers are now booking their travel experience online. That's a vast increase from the mere 35 percent of travelers online last year. Online marketing and user friendly Web sites are becoming increasingly important and we are learning what we can to try to stay ahead of this trend.

While attending TravelCom, I was also invited to participate in an Executive Women's Forum to discuss unique challenges and opportunities for women as leaders in the ever changing online travel market. It was an incredible experience to be among these selected national industry leaders to discuss and learn about these new online trends.

Have a great week.

*Margie R. Emmert*

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### TEAM FY 2008 Application Deadline

Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) FY 2008 applications are due to the Arizona Office of Tourism due by April 20, 2007 at 5 p.m. TEAM is a matching grant program offered to statewide destination marketing organizations, statewide tourism based associations, and tribal entities, to help develop tourism related marketing materials. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. Applications are available on our business to business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) under the Grants section. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Karen Bult, Tourism Education and Development Manager at 602-364-3708 or via e-mail at [kbult@azot.gov](mailto:kbult@azot.gov).

### SAVE THE DATE: Arizona Tourism University Presents “How to Conduct a Visitor Survey”

Please mark your calendar of the next installment of Arizona Tourism University (ATU) workshops entitled “How to Conduct a Visitor Survey.” All workshops are complimentary. To register for one of the workshops, please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via e-mail at [smartins@azot.gov](mailto:smartins@azot.gov).

April 24, 2007  
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.  
La Quinta Inn & Suites  
2015 South Beulah Blvd  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

April 26, 2007  
1 p.m. – 3 p.m.  
White Stallion Ranch  
9251 West Twin Peaks Road  
Tucson AZ 85743

April 27, 2007  
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Glendale Civic Center  
5750 West Glenn Drive  
Glendale, AZ 85301

### AOT Needs Calendar of Event Information

AOT is requesting late 2007 through 2008 event information to be considered for the calendar of events posted at [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com). The calendar is currently updated with events through July 2007. AOT needs event information that occurs from July 2007 through December 2007 and

any major events of 2008. Events to be considered must be open to the public and of interest to participants or spectators from neighboring communities across Arizona or from out of state. Submissions should include the date, including the year; community in which the event takes place, name of event; venue; venue address; description; admission, event time; phone number and/or Web site for the public to obtain additional information. Please include your contact information so that we may reach you with any questions we may have prior to posting your event. Photography is encouraged, (images should be a minimum of 300 DPI at 4"x5" original size) and we can supply you with an image information form. Additional events through July 2007 may also be submitted immediately if the event is not already posted. Please check the Web site to see if your event is already included. If you have questions or would like an event submission form, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at [Mmagnusson@azot.gov](mailto:Mmagnusson@azot.gov) or by phone at 602-364-3695 or fax at 602-364-3702.

## Industry News

### Enterprise Rent-A-Car Buys Rival Vanguard

In the latest sign of consolidation within the car rental industry, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, the largest car rental company in North America, said Friday it has acquired a smaller rival, Vanguard Car Rental, which owns the National and Alamo brands. With \$9 billion in revenues, a fleet of about 880,000 vehicles and its network of 7,000 locations, Enterprise's strength is its breadth and penetration into cities across the country. Vanguard, on the other hand, specializes in serving corporate customers at airport locations. (*Page B9, New York Times, 3/31*)

### Survey: Boomers Serve As Sources For Each Other

Baby boomers rely on each other for a plethora of product and service recommendations, according to a study released by Weber Shandwick. [PR Week](#) reports that the study by KRC Research found that of 502 boomers (Americans born between 1946 and 1964) six out of 10 are asked for their recommendations twice a week. Of those people who were asked to recommend something in the past year, 89 percent advised their friends, or fellow boomers, the study found. The telephone study also revealed that boomer-to-friend communications, as Weber Shandwick calls them, are circular, with nearly all boomers (93 percent) identifying their boomer friends as trusted sources of information. Weber Shandwick's chief reputation strategist Dr. Leslie Gaines-Ross said there is surprisingly little study done on baby boomers and their direct communications, despite their impending purchasing heft. "There is a [underestimation regarding] what a vital group they are," said Gaines-Ross.

### Tourists From UK, Germany, Japan and France Dropped 5 Percent Last Year

The number of tourists to the USA from the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and France dropped 5 percent last year, a development that alarms the U.S. tourism industry. Those four nations typically supply almost half of all the foreign tourists visiting the USA reports [USA Today](#). New Commerce Department figures show there were about 10 million visits to the USA last year from those four countries, 500,000 fewer than in 2005. The drop-off, the first decline for any of those countries since 2003, worries U.S. tourism leaders because overseas visits continue to lag behind pre-9/11 levels. The decline "underscores the need for the U.S. government to do a much better job of inviting people and welcoming visitors to the country," says Jay Rasulo, the Disney executive who is chairman of the Travel Industry Association of America. Despite the falloff in the biggest markets, the number of international visits to the USA was up in 2006,

nearly matching the record of 51.2 million in 2000. That's because visits from Canada and Mexico were up sharply. Those visitors, however, tend to take shorter trips and spend less money.

### Survey: "Voluntourism" Vacations Taking Off

Surveys conducted recently by Orbitz, Travelocity and the Travel Industry Association of America confirm that consumers are becoming more interested in vacations with a volunteerism aspect, also known as "voluntourism." Opportunities that once existed largely with non-profit activist groups are being adopted by a wide range of travel agencies and tour operators, too reports [Associated Press](#). Sally Brown, who heads the Indianapolis not-for-profit group Ambassadors for Children, said the number of travel organizations of various kinds that offer voluntourism trips has probably doubled in the past three years. Many of the vacation volunteers are baby boomers, who have the money to spend and the time to donate as they edge closer to retirement. But with inspiration coming from a variety of sources – be it 9/11, Hurricane Katrina or just having more disposable income – participants range from teenagers to retirees. Voluntourism is catching on in college campuses, where many students would rather spend spring break doing something altruistic than carousing. They don't always have to rough it, either. Ambassadors for Children even offers a "light" mission in which travelers stay at a four-star hotel in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and spend three of the eight days visiting an orphanage, library and preschool. That may appeal to a family group wishing to make a cultural connection, Brown said, or just those wanting to mix purpose with pleasure. "Immersion with voluntourism is so much more than you could get by sitting on a beach or on a tour bus," said Brown, a one-time flight attendant who founded the organization in 1998.

### Latest in Package Travel: Wine Tasting and Theatre Tours

Experiential travel is getting more popular than ever, according to United States Tour Operator Association (USTOA) President Bob Whitley. He makes the point that today's tour operators offer special visits and experiences that even the most sophisticated traveler would be unable to book privately. Recent offerings from USTOA members include private wind-producing villas in Tuscany and private cooking classes in Provence and Sicily. Groups of young people can meet their peers from all over the world, while bike riding, whitewater rafting, and hitting the clubs in various offers from Contiki Tours. There are also after-hours museum visits, meals in private settings and even offers to tour a palace from Tauck World Discovery and others. USTOA members are required to meet the travel industry's highest standards, according to Mr. Whitley, including participation in the association's Travelers Assistance Program. The program requires, among other things, that each company set aside \$1 Million security to protect consumers' payments in the event the company goes out of business. (*Report by David Wilkening for Travelmole*)

### Study Shows More Travelers Want a Getaway all to Themselves

According to a recent survey conducted by AAA, more and more people would rather leave everything and *everyone* behind when they travel. Because of this new trend, solo travel has become increasingly popular across the country. It offers travelers the ultimate in flexibility and relaxation for every facet of a person's trip, ranging from where one eats to how one spends his day. According to the Travel Industry Association, nearly one-quarter of U.S. travelers, or 34.8 million adults, have taken a vacation by themselves in the past three years. Travelers between the ages of 18-35 proved to be the most popular demographic, accounting for 35 percent of solo travelers. The next largest groups are 35-49 year olds (27 percent), followed by 50-64 year olds (26 percent). 65 year-olds represent the smallest percentage (12 percent) of solo travelers. "More and more people are realizing that they do not need a travel companion in order to get away," said Judy Santiago, world travel director for AAA Arizona. "Solo travel can be quite liberating. When

you travel alone, the choices are yours to make, and you have no one else to please but yourself.” AAA travel professionals recommend Europe as one of the best destinations for solo travelers looking for international vacation ideas. Hawaii, the Caribbean and Mexico are other accommodating destinations for people traveling alone. However, if you decide to venture outside the U.S., it is important to remember that Americans must have passports when traveling by air anywhere outside the country, *including* Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. “Whether you want to stay close to home or venture outside the country, the objective of traveling solo is to experience a destination at your own pace,” said Santiago. “From Tucson to Palm Springs and Sedona to Mexico, Arizonans have several unique destinations within their reach.”

### **PWC Predicts Record Year for U.S. Lodging**

Following a record \$5 billion invested in the U.S. lodging industry in 2006, the industry is expected to invest approximately \$5.5 billion in 2007, according to a new forecast from PricewaterhouseCoopers. The 2007 increase reflects continued spending on a variety of items, including further in-room technology enhancements such as MP3 compatible sound systems and television systems; continued installation of flat-screen televisions; high-speed wireless Internet, self check-in and checkout kiosks and computers and printers in business centers. “Although the maintenance and general condition of U.S. hotels is the best it has ever been, the industry continues to make improvements and offer further enhancements,” said Bjorn Hansen, principal of PwC's Hospitality & Leisure practice. (*Modern Agent.com*)

### **WTTC to Promote Climate Change Via Global Ad Campaign**

The World Travel & Tourism Council is launching an advertising campaign on the need to address climate change. The organization will run full-page ads in the U.K.'s The Daily Telegraph newspaper, Newsweek magazine, The Wall Street Journal and travel trade media. The WTTC has posted a forum on its Web site to encourage discussion among travel industry professionals of climate change and its possible implications for the travel industry. It will also promote discussion at its 7th Global Travel & Tourism Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, May 11 and 12. (*Travel Weekly.com*, 4/3)

### **More Biz Travel Involves the Family**

Traveling for work once meant sacrificing precious time away from home. But as the American workplace becomes more flexible about letting employees juggle their duties with family life, people are finding it easier to bring their spouse and kids wherever their jobs take them. According to the National Business Travel Association, 62 percent of U.S. business travelers said they add a leisure component to at least one business trip per year. Among those travelers, two-thirds say they bring a family member or friend with them. Pushing the trend is the growing number of single parents, women in executive ranks and two-income families. (*AP; Atlanta Journal-Constitution.com/Business*)

### **US Senate Passes Major Travel Reforms**

On March 13 the Senate adopted three key provisions put forth in the Blueprint to Discover America, which was introduced by the industry just six weeks ago. They are:

- Expanding the Visa Waiver Program to a greater number of allied countries upon the implementation of new security procedures, including a reliable “exit” tracking system at U.S. airports;
- Establishing “model ports” at America’s top 20 international arrival airports including instructional videos, enhanced line management and assistance for international travelers upon arrival; and

- Authorizing the hiring of at least 200 new Customs and Boarder Protection officer to alleviate staff shortages at the top 20 arrival airports.

TIA; the Travel Business Roundtable and the Discover America Partnership will work closely with the Senate and House conference in the coming weeks to ensure the three provisions remain in the legislation.

### **New Study Identifies Ideal Vacation Trip**

The Travel Industry Association and American Express released the results of a landmark survey that profiles what Americans "actually" do on vacation, versus what they "want" to do. The results were unveiled Thursday at TIA's TravelCom/ResExpo show in Las Vegas. The "Ideal American Vacation Trip" report is based on a representative sample of 2,500 vacation travelers conducted online in 2006 and highlights unique travel behavior by market segments. The report found that overall, rest and relaxation and spending time with significant others are the most important attributes of an ideal vacation trip. Vacation travelers would like to travel more by plane and ship and, not surprisingly, would like to double the length of their average trip. For more details, contact 202-408-2183. (*Special to TA*)

### **N. M. County Passes Tax to Fund Spaceport**

Voters in a New Mexico county have approved a tax increase that will help build the nation's first commercial spaceport, state officials said Thursday. The \$200 million spaceport is to be built in scrubland near the White Sands Missile Base and is expected to open for business by early 2010. British entrepreneur Richard Branson and his company Virgin Galactic have signed a long-term lease with the state to make New Mexico its international headquarters and the hub of a space-tourism business. The sales tax increase of 25 cents on a \$100 purchase is expected to generate about \$50 million for construction of the spaceport. (*Page A3, Washington Post*)

### **U.S. Online Travel Sales to Reach \$146 Billion**

For the first time, online travel bookings in the U.S. will surpass offline bookings in volume this year, according to PhoCusWright. In 2007, eMarketer estimates that 41.3 million U.S. households will book travel online, representing 52.5 percent of all U.S. online households. This year, U.S. online consumer travel sales, including airline, hotel, rental car, cruise and vacation package reservations, will reach \$94 billion, up 19 percent over 2006, according to eMarket estimates. Sales are predicted to remain strong out to 2010, although growth rates will steadily decline. A tighter market will exacerbate the fierce competition between online travel agencies and travel suppliers. (*Modern Agent.com, 4/5*)